

Hittite *pa-ak-nu-*

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Both the semantics and origin of the Hittite verb stem *pa-ak-nu-* are uncertain. The most probable meaning is ‘to defame, to slander, to denounce’ or something very close. In this paper, I suggest that possible Indo-European cognates are to be found in Germanic, Celtic, and Baltic.

The *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* lists the following forms for the Hittite verb *pa-ak-nu-*: (3rd pl. pret. act.) *pa-ak-nu-er*, *pa-ak-nu-e-er* (all OH/NS), (uncertain) *pa-a[k-nu-an-zi?]* (OH?/NS) and gives the following meanings: ‘to defame, to slander, to denounce’. Kloekhorst (2008:618) follows the *Chicago Hittite Dictionary* in assigning the same meanings to this verb. However, he notes that it is difficult to determine the exact meaning. Indeed, the meaning ‘to praise’ was formerly very hesitantly assigned to this verb (cf. Friedrich 1991:155; Sturtevant 1936:114). Kloekhorst takes *pa-ak-nu-* to be a causative stem and tentatively reconstructs a pre-Hittite **Pe(H)K-*. He does not propose an etymology, simply stating that further connections are unclear.

I would like to propose that the following Proto-Indo-European stem be considered as a possible candidate for the ancestor of the Hittite verb *pa-ak-nu-*: **b^{he}H₁g^{h-}/*b^{ho}H₁g^{h-}* (> **b^hēg^{h-}/*b^hōg^{h-}*) ‘to blame, to fault; to quarrel, to contend, to dispute, to argue’ (cf. Rix 2001:68 **b^{he}h₁g^{h-}* ‘to become angry, to quarrel’; Pokorny 1959:115 **bhēgh-* : **bhōgh-* ‘to quarrel, to dispute’; Walde 1972—1932.II:130 **bhāgh-* (?) or **bhēgh-* : **bhōgh-* (?); Mann 1984—1987:70 **bhēghō*, *-iō* ‘to oust’ [?]; Gamkrelidze—Ivanov 1995.I:133 **b^{he}g^{h-}/*b^{ho}g^{h-}* ‘to quarrel’). This Proto-Indo-European stem is reconstructed on the basis of the following forms in Germanic, Celtic, and Baltic:

Germanic:

Old Icelandic *bági* ‘an adversary’; *bágr* ‘contest, strife’; *bágingi* ‘distress, difficulties’; *bægja* ‘to quarrel; to contend about a thing’; (metaph.) ‘to treat harshly, to oppress one’.

Norwegian *bægje* (vb.) ‘to obstruct’, *bægje* (n.) ‘obstacle’.

Swedish (dial.) *båg* (adj.) ‘obstinate, stubborn’, *båg* (n.) ‘difficulty, trouble’.

Old Frisian *bāga* ‘to boast, to brag about’.

Old Saxon *bāg* ‘praise’.

Middle Low German *bagen* ‘to praise, to boast, to brag’.

Old High German *bāg* ‘quarrel’; *bāgēn* ‘to quarrel’; *bāga*, *pāga* ‘quarrel, fight’; *bāgan*, *pāgan* ‘to quarrel, to fight’.

Celtic:

Old Irish *bágaid* ‘to fight, to contend, to quarrel’, *bág* ‘contest, contention, fight’, *bágach* ‘combative, battlesome, warlike’.

Middle Welsh *bwyo* ‘to fight’; Welsh *bai* ‘fault, blame’.

Cornish *beio* ‘to blame’.

Baltic:

Latvian *buōztiēs* ‘to get angry’.

As can be clearly seen, both in form and semantics (provided the assigned meanings are correct), Hittite *pa-ak-nu-* fits quite well with what is found in Germanic, Celtic, and Baltic.

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